Creatures That Cannot Be II

Creature Incarnations
By Robert Wiese

Last year's rendition of Creatures That Cannot Be was wildly popular, so welcome to the second annual feature in *Creature Incarnations*! We will be examining some creatures that the **D&D** rules do not allow to exist, for one reason or another. The results range from the "this is okay, why not?" to the "okay, I see your point."

Please remember that these creatures break the rules. However (aside from the point at which they do break the rules), they follow the rules as best as they can. The templates were applied correctly, for example, and they still have the usual statistics for **D&D** creatures. Don't give yourself a headache worrying about conflicting abilities and such as that.

If you actually use any of these creatures in your game, drop me an email at: robwiese8(at)yahoo(dot)com and tell me how it went. I always like to hear great stories; I still have your tales of last year's skiurid ninjas.

Walk this way, please, and keep away from the cages. We are not sure how the powers of all these creatures work together, and we don't want anyone getting hurt (or suing us). You have been warned.

Half-Dragon Dragon

Technically, you can apply the half-dragon template to a dragon if all you use is the *Monster Manual*. However, since it doesn't make sense to do so, *Races of the Dragon* clarifies that the template doesn't apply to a dragon. But the errata for the *Monster Manual* does not include this correction, so this creature is kind of "on the cusp" of illegality. But some strangeness is introduced when you apply the half-dragon template to a dragon, so it makes sense that it is not allowed.

This creature is a half-white copper dragon, so it has three breath weapons. Cool. They each have different effects and different amounts of damage, but the choices should throw off a party. It is basically coppery, but with a lot of frosty white at the ends of its scales; thus, it looks like a copper dragon that stayed out overnight in the frost, kind of like your car does when you leave it out overnight in the cold. Its head is larger and more bony-looking than a typical copper dragon's, and it has a plate of bone that joins the two ridges that a copper dragon normally possesses.

Producer's Note: The concept of a half-dragon-dragon is submitted quite a bit via *Ask Wizards*. So in a recent Valentine's Week *Sage Advice*, we addressed this very question of legality. The Sage said yeah: half-dragon-dragons are in, albeit rare.

Half-Dragon (White) Young Adult Copper Dragon CR 13

CE Large dragon

Init +4; **Senses** keen senses, blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +23, Spot +23

Aura frightful presence

Languages Common, Draconic, Elven, Gnomish

AC 29, touch 9, flat-footed 29

(-1 size, +20 natural)

hp 178 (17 HD); **DR** 5/magic

Immune acid, cold, paralysis, sleep

SR 19

Fort +14, **Ref** +10, **Will** +13

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), fly 150 ft. (poor); spider climb, Hover, Wingover

Melee bite +24 (2d6+8) and

2 claws +19 (1d8+4) and
2 wings +19 (1d6+4) and
tail slap +19 (1d8+12)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with bite)

Base Atk +17; **Grp** +29

Atk Options Flyby Attack, Power Attack, breath weapon

Sorcerer Spells Known (cast 6/7/5 per day, CL 5th):

2nd -- *bear's endurance, scintillating scales**

1st -- *expeditious retreat, mage armor, magic missile, shield*

0 -- *dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound, mage hand, prestidigitation, read magic*

* Spells from *Spell Compendium*

Abilities Str 27, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 18, Wis 17, Cha 18

Feats Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Recover Breath, Wingover

Skills Bluff +24, Concentration +28, Diplomacy +18, Disguise +4 (+6 acting), Escape Artist +20, Hide -4, Intimidate +6, Jump +12, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (history) +14, Knowledge (nature) +14, Listen +23, Search +24, Sense Motive +23, Spellcraft +6, Spot +23, Survival +3 (+5 following tracks, +5 in aboveground natural environments), Use Magic Device +24, Use Rope +0 (+2 bindings)

Possessions hoard 39,000 gp

Frightful Presence (Ex) Creatures within 150 feet that have between 5 and 16 HD become shaken for 4d6 rounds if they fail a Will save DC 22. Creatures with 4 or fewer HD become panicked for 4d6 rounds.

Breath Weapon (Su) Three different breath weapons; one breath weapon used every 1d4 rounds (but see Recover Breath). 80-foot line, 10d4 acid damage, Reflex DC 22 half. 40-foot cone, slow 1d6+3 rounds, Reflex DC 22 negates. 30-foot line, available only once per day, 6d8 cold damage, Reflex DC 22 half.

Spider Climb (Ex) A half-dragon copper dragon can climb on stone surfaces as though using the *spider climb* spell.

Vampiric Plants

Someone on the message board mentioned vampiric treants, and I thought the idea was really cool. I kind of got carried away and made two vampiric plants. There is no template for making vampires out of plants, because vampires are associated with wolves and bats rather than roses. But the idea is interesting. The vine horror is from *Fiend Folio* and comes in at a nice CR 4 (so a vampiric one is CR 6). The night twist is a nasty tree from

and comes in at CR 12, so the vampiric one is CR 14. Its abilities work particularly well with those of vampires.

In making these creatures, I wondered if the undead type would cancel the plant type's immunities, but it turns out that undead are immune to most of the same things that plants are. The real strangeness here is that as vampires, these plants can change form into wolves and bats, and not plant versions of these forms. So you have plants changing into animals (sort of). Plus, these plants can turn gaseous and spider climb. Weird -- and when it comes to creeping out your players, describing an eerie patch of vines that slithers up and over the castle wall should definitely do the trick.

Vampire Vine Horror CR 6
NE Medium undead (augmented plant)
Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +14, Spot +14
Languages Sylvan

AC 26, touch 12, flat-footed 24; Dodge
(+2 Dex, +14 natural)
hp 32 (5 HD); fast heal 5; **DR** 5/bludgeoning and 10/silver and magic
Immune mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability drain, energy drain, damage to physical ability scores, fatigue, exhaustion, any effect requiring a Fort save unless it is harmless or works on objects, death from massive damage
Resist cold 10, electricity 10, turn +4
Fort +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3
Weakness destroyed when at 0 hit points

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), swim 20 ft., spider climb
Melee 2 slams +10 (1d6+7 plus 2 negative levels on one slam)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +10
Atk Options Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, blood drain, energy drain
Special Actions animate vines, children of the night, create spawn, dominate

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Abilities Str 24, Dex 14, Con --, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 14
SQ alternate form, gaseous form, malleability, spider climb
Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes
Skills Bluff +10, Concentration +2, Hide +10 (+25 in swamps or algae), Listen +14, Move Silently +10, Search +8, Sense Motive +10, Spot +14, Swim +19

Blood Drain (Ex) A vampire can suck blood from a living victim with its fangs by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe, it drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution drain each round the pin is maintained. On each such successful attack, the vampire gains 5 temporary hit points.

Energy Drain (Su) Living creatures hit by the vampire's slam attack (or any other natural weapon the vampire

possesses) gain two negative levels. For each negative level bestowed, the vampire gains 5 temporary hit points. A vampire can use its energy drain ability once per round.

Animate Vines (Sp) A vampire vine horror can use this ability to animate any single vine or similar kind of plant life within 90 feet. An animated vine fights as an assassin vine in all respects (see the *Monster Manual*). An animated vine loses its ability to fight if the vine horror that animated it is incapacitated or moves out of range.

Children of the Night (Su) Vampires command the lesser creatures of the world and once per day can call forth 1d6+1 rat swarms, 1d4+1 bat swarms, or a pack of 3d6 wolves as a standard action. These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve the vampire for up to 1 hour.

Create Spawn (Su) A humanoid or monstrous humanoid slain by the vampire's energy drain rises as a vampire spawn 1d4 days after burial. If the vampire instead drains the victim's Constitution to 0 or lower, the victim returns as a spawn if it had 4 or less HD and was a humanoid or monstrous humanoid, and as a monstrous vampire if it had 5 or more HD and was an aberration, animal, dragon, fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, or vermin. In either case, the new monstrous vampire or vampire spawn is under the command of the vampire and remains enslaved until its master's destruction. At any given time the vampire may have enslaved spawn totaling no more than twice its own Hit Dice; any spawn it creates that would exceed this limit are created as free-willed monstrous vampires or vampire spawn. A monstrous vampire that is enslaved may create and enslave spawn of its own, so a master monstrous vampire can control a number of lesser monstrous vampires in this fashion. The vampire may voluntarily free an enslaved spawn in order to enslave a new spawn, but once freed, a monstrous vampire or vampire spawn cannot be enslaved again.

Dominate (Su) The vampire can crush an opponent's will just by looking into his or her eyes. This is similar to a gaze attack, except that the vampire must use a standard action, and those merely looking at the vampire are not affected. Anyone the vampire targets must succeed on a Will save (DC 16) or fall instantly under the vampire's influence as though by a *dominate person* spell (caster level 12th). The ability has a range of 30 feet.

Alternate Form (Su) The vampire can assume the shape of a bat, dire bat, wolf, or dire wolf as a standard action. While in its alternate form, the vampire loses its natural slam attack and dominate ability, but it gains the natural weapons and extraordinary special attacks of its new form. The vampire can remain in that form until it assumes another or until the next sunrise.

Gaseous Form (Su) As a standard action, the vampire can assume gaseous form at will as the spell (caster level 5th), but it can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability.

Malleability (Ex) Because of a vampire vine horror's unusual body structure, it can compress its body enough to squeeze through a 1-inch-wide crack. Cracks and similar openings that are 1 inch or more in width do not slow the vine horror at all.

Spider Climb (Ex) The vampire can climb sheer surfaces as though with a *spider climb* spell.

Vampire Night Twist CR 14
NE Large undead (augmented plant)
Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision, darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +20, Spot +23
Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan

AC 37, touch 16, flat-footed 37; Dodge
(-1 size, +21 natural, +7 deflection)
hp 97 (15 HD); fast heal 5; **DR** 10/slashing and silver and magic
Immune mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning,

disease, death effects, critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability drain, energy drain, damage to physical ability scores, fatigue, exhaustion, any effect requiring a Fort save unless it is harmless or works on objects, death from massive damage
Resist cold 10, electricity 10, turn +4
Fort +16, **Ref** +14, **Will** +17
Weakness vulnerable to fire, destroyed when at 0 hit points

Speed 10 ft. (2 squares), spider climb
Melee 3 slams +27 (2d8+17 plus 2 negative levels on one slam)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.
Base Atk +11; **Grp** +32
Atk Options Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, blood drain, energy drain
Special Actions children of the night, create spawn, death curse, despair song, dominate, wind blast
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th):
3/day -- *blight* (DC 22), *deeper darkness*, *entangle*, *fear* (DC 21), *phantasmal killer* (DC 21)

Abilities Str 45, Dex 10, Con --, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 25
SQ alternate form, gaseous form, spider climb, unholy grace
Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Diehard, Dodge, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack
Skills Bluff +15, Concentration +7, Hide +17 (+33 in swamps or marshes), Jump +5, Knowledge (nature) +11, Listen +20, Move Silently +18, Search +10, Sense Motive +11, Spot +23, Survival +10 (+12 in aboveground natural environments)

Blood Drain (Ex) A vampire can suck blood from a living victim with its fangs by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe, it drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of Constitution drain each round the pin is maintained. On each such successful attack, the vampire gains 5 temporary hit points.

Energy Drain (Su) Living creatures hit by the vampire's slam attack (or any other natural weapon the vampire possesses) gain two negative levels. For each negative level bestowed, the vampire gains 5 temporary hit points. A vampire can use its energy drain ability once per round.

Death Curse (Sp) The creature dealing the death blow must make a DC 24 Will save to avoid being cursed with hideous and unsettling nightmares that prevent restful sleep and deal 1d10 points of damage. The recipient becomes fatigued and unable to prepare or ready arcane spells for the next 24 hours. The nightmares and resulting damage affect the subject every night until the curse is removed or the victim dies. If the curse is removed, the victim remains fatigued for 24 hours thereafter. A *limited wish* spell or more powerful magic cast while the subject is in the throes of a nightmare is the only way to remove a vampire night twist's death curse. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Despair Song (Su) Every evening, this creature emits a sorrowful sound that inspires melancholy and despair in all creatures with an Intelligence score of 6 or higher within a radius of 750 feet. Those who fail a DC 24 Will save are affected as if by a *crushing despair* spell (caster level 15th) and must seek out the source of their sorrow (the vampire night twist) to the neglect of all other tasks or needs, including eating or sleeping. If physically restrained and not allowed to seek out the vampire night twist, a victim of this despair song loses 1d10 hit points every evening until it dies or the enchantment is removed. Relocating a victim outside the area affected by the night twist's song does not end the enchantment. The despair song ceases to affect a subject in the round after the vampire night twist makes a slam attack against it. To remove the effects of the night twist's despair song before it attacks, a *limited wish* or more powerful magic must be employed. *Dispel magic* or *dispel evil* spells cannot remove the enchantment. However, a bard of 12th level or higher using the *song of freedom* class feature can provide the subject a second Will save. The destruction of the vampire night twist always ends the enchantment. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Children of the Night (Su) Vampires command the lesser creatures of the world and once per day can call forth 1d6+1 rat swarms, 1d4+1 bat swarms, or a pack of 3d6 wolves as a standard action. These creatures arrive in 2d6 rounds and serve the vampire for up to 1 hour.

Create Spawn (Su) A humanoid or monstrous humanoid slain by the vampire's energy drain rises as a vampire spawn 1d4 days after burial. If the vampire instead drains the victim's Constitution to 0 or lower, the victim returns as a spawn if it had 4 or less HD and was a humanoid or monstrous humanoid, and as a monstrous vampire if it had 5 or more HD and was an aberration, animal, dragon, fey, giant, humanoid, magical beast, monstrous humanoid, or vermin. In either case, the new monstrous vampire or vampire spawn is under the command of the vampire and remains enslaved until its master's destruction. At any given time the vampire may have enslaved spawn totaling no more than twice its own Hit Dice; any spawn it creates that would exceed this limit are created as free-willed monstrous vampires or vampire spawn. A monstrous vampire that is enslaved may create and enslave spawn of its own, so a master monstrous vampire can control a number of lesser monstrous vampires in this fashion. The vampire may voluntarily free an enslaved spawn in order to enslave a new spawn, but once freed, a monstrous vampire or vampire spawn cannot be enslaved again.

Dominate (Su) The vampire can crush an opponent's will just by looking onto his or her eyes. This is similar to a gaze attack, except that the vampire must use a standard action, and those merely looking at the vampire are not affected. Anyone the vampire targets must succeed on a Will save (DC 16) or fall instantly under the vampire's influence as though by a *dominate person* spell (caster level 12th). The ability has a range of 30 feet.

Wind Blast (Su) A vampire night twist's wind blast ability is similar to the *gust of wind* spell. The creature can use its wind blast as a free action, but does so only when it feels threatened. A powerful, gale-force wind (50 mph) emanates from the tree in all directions out to 120 feet. All other effects of the wind blast are the same as those of the *gust of wind* spell. Any creature in the affected area can avoid the effect with a DC 24 Fortitude save. The save DC is Charisma-based. If a vampire night twist is attacked with fire, it uses its wind blast to extinguish the flames.

Alternate Form (Su) The vampire can assume the shape of a bat, dire bat, wolf, or dire wolf as a standard action. While in its alternate form, the vampire loses its natural slam attack and dominate ability, but it gains the natural weapons and extraordinary special attacks of its new form. The vampire can remain in that form until it assumes another or until the next sunrise.

Gaseous Form (Su) As a standard action, the vampire can assume gaseous form at will as the spell (caster level 5th), but it can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability.

Spider Climb (Ex) The vampire can climb sheer surfaces as though with a *spider climb* spell.

Unholy Grace (Su) A night twist adds its Charisma modifier as a bonus on all its saving throws, and as a deflection bonus to its Armor Class (included above).

Nymph Lich

People on the list like liches, so here's one to satisfy their cravings. An illegal one, to be sure: The lich template can be applied only to humanoids. But a fey lich seems almost reasonable (in spirit), and the nymph already casts spells as a druid, so a few more druid levels were all it took. The only rule broken here is the template application; the nymph meets all other requirements for becoming a lich.

However, this is a very weird lich because the template says that the base creature keeps its special abilities. So, even though the nymph becomes rather skeletal, she still possesses blinding beauty and all who look upon her (bones) naked risk becoming permanently blinded. I guess this shows that beauty is more than skin-deep. And, to add to the weirdness, this creature has the Corrupt Wildshape feat, so she can still change into Small, Medium, and Large animal forms (though ghastly undead versions of them).

Part of the fun in creating a lich is creating their phylactery. Normally, a nymph serves as guardian to a sacred place in the wild, holding court to all types of animals. With the nymph lich, we can imagine her grove as a corrupt, evil place, occupied by fiendish animals (as well as vampiric plants). And her phylactery? Is it hidden there as well -- or perhaps secreted in the trove of an allied green dragon . . . or in a specially locked trunk, sunk to the bottom of the murk . . . or perhaps infused in the horn of one of last year's monstrous unicorns. The lich herself isn't telling.

Nymph Lich
Druid 6 CR 15
NE Medium undead
Init +3;
Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +27, Spot +27
Aura fear
Languages Common, Druidic, Sylvan

AC 25, touch 18, flat-footed 22; Dodge (+3 Dex, +2 armor, +5 deflection, +5 natural)
hp 65 (12 HD);
DR 10/cold iron and 15/bludgeoning and magic
Immune cold, electricity, polymorph, mind-affecting spells and effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability drain, energy drain, damage to physical ability scores, fatigue and exhaustion effects, any effect requiring a Fort save unless it is harmless or affects objects, death from massive damage
Resist turn +4
Fort +14, **Ref** +17, **Will** +21
Weakness destroyed when phylactery is destroyed, returns in 1d10 days if reduced to 0 hit points

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), swim 20 ft.
Melee touch +10/+5 (1d8+5, Will DC 20 for half damage)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +7
Atk Options Combat Casting, paralyzing touch, stunning glance
Special Actions blinding beauty
Combat Gear 2 *potions of invisibility*, 3 *potions of inflict light wounds*
Typical Druid Spells Prepared (CL 13th):
7th (1/day) -- *slime wave** (DC 21)
6th (2/day) -- *greater dispel magic, miasma** (DC 20)
5th (3/day) -- *bite of the weretiger**, *call lightning storm* (DC 19), *memory rot** (DC 19), *wall of thorns*
4th (5/day) -- *flame strike* (DC 18), *freedom of movement, languor** (DC 18), *starvation** (DC 18), *sudden*

stalagmite* (DC 18)

3rd (5/day) -- *energy vortex** (DC 17), *icelance** (DC 17), *infestation of maggots** (DC 17), *meld into stone*, *spike growth* (DC 17)

2nd (6/day) -- *barkskin, blinding spittle**, *body of the sun** (DC 16), *resist energy, saltray** (ranged touch +10, DC 16), *splinterbolt** (ranged +10)

1st (6/day) -- *calm animals* (DC 15), *camouflage**, *entangle* (DC 15), *longstrider, obscuring mist, speak with animals, wings of the sea**

0 (6/day) -- *create water, detect magic, know direction, light, mending, read magic*

* Spells are from *Spell Compendium*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th):

1/day -- *dimension door*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 17, Con --, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 21

SQ resist nature's lure, spontaneous casting (*summon nature's ally* spells), trackless step, unearthly grace, wild empathy +17, wild shape 2/day, woodland stride

Feats Combat Casting, Corrupt Wild Shape, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Weapon Finesse

Skills Concentration +20 (+24 casting in threatened areas), Diplomacy +7, Escape Artist +12, Handle Animal +14, Heal +13, Hide +20, Knowledge (nature) +14, Listen +27, Move Silently +20, Ride +5, Search +12, Sense Motive +21, Spellcraft +16, Spot +27, Survival +12 (+14 in aboveground natural environments), Swim +8, Use Rope +3 (+5 bindings)

Possessions combat gear plus *bracers of armor +2*, *cloak of resistance +2*, *brooch of shielding*

Fear Aura (Su) Creatures of less than 5 HD in a 60-foot radius that look at a lich must succeed on a Will save DC 18 or be affected as though by a *fear* spell from a 12th-level sorcerer. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same lich's aura for 24 hours.

Paralyzing Touch (Su) Any living creature a lich hits with its touch attack must succeed on a Fortitude save DC 18 or be permanently paralyzed. *Remove paralysis* or any spell that can remove a curse can free the victim. The effect cannot be dispelled. Anyone paralyzed by a lich seems dead, though a DC 20 Spot check or a DC 15 Heal check reveals that the victim is still alive.

Stunning Glance (Su) A nymph lich can stun a creature within 30 feet with a look. The target creature must succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save or be stunned for 2d4 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Blinding Beauty (Su) All humanoids within 30 feet of a nymph lich who look directly at it must succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save or be blinded permanently as though by the *blindness* spell. A nymph can suppress or resume this ability as a free action.

Unearthly Grace (Su) A nymph lich adds its Charisma modifier as a bonus on all saving throws and as a deflection bonus to her Armor Class. (The statistics block already reflects these bonuses.)

As usual, go to the Wizards message boards and share your weird illegal creations, and what you like about them. Maybe Wizards can make them entries in the next Creature Competition and give a prize for the one everyone likes the best!

Additional Feats

These feats are not presented in the *Player's Handbook* or *Monster Manual*.

Corrupt Wildshape (from *Libris Mortis*): You can use your wild shape ability even though you are undead. The ability functions just as if you were a living creature using the ability, with the following exceptions. You do

not gain a Constitution score in the new form, and you retain all the immunities of the undead type while in your new form. The form you assume looks half-decayed, with missing patches of fur and rotted, worm-eaten flesh. While you are in this form, the rank odor of death hangs around you.

Recover Breath (from *Draconomicon*): You reduce the interval between uses of your breath weapon. You wait 1 round less than usual before breathing again, but always at least 1 round. The feat stacks with the effects of metabreath feats, reducing the total time you must wait to use your breath weapon again by 1 round.

About the Author

Robert Wiese has been playing **D&D** since 1978 after he watched a game played in the car on the way home from a Boy Scouts meeting. He was fascinated, and delved into this strange world of dragons and magic and sourcebooks. Years later, he was hired to edit tournaments for the **RPGA** Network, and from there progressed to running the network after his boss was assassinated in the great Christmas purge of 1996. Times were tough, but he persevered and brought the **RPGA** into a shining new era. Eventually he met a girl who liked to play **D&D** too, and he left Renton for the warmth and casinos of Reno, Nevada. Now, he works in the Pharmacology department of UNR studying mouse foot muscles and the effects of RF emissions on same. He spends as much time as possible with his wife Rhonda and year-old son Owen.

Over the course of his career, he wrote over sixty tournament adventures for the **RPGA**, and he continues to inflict his creativity on you through this website. He hopes that you find his little creations useful, or at least amusing.

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